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NATIONAL GUILDS

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The Present Economic Structure—Its Weaknesses and Injustices—Were things ever better?—The Aim of State Socialism—A Rival Theory—The New Movement of Guild Socialism—Its Doctrines and Assumptions—Payment "as Human Beings"—The "Degradation" of earning Wages—Production irrespective of Demand—Is that the Real Meaning of Freedom?—The Old Evils under a New Name—A Conceivably Practical Scheme for some other World.

MOST people will admit that there are many glaring faults in the present economic structure of society. Wealth has been increased at an exhilarating pace during the last century, and yet the war has shown us that we had not nearly realised how great is the productive power of a nation when it is in earnest, and that the pace at which wealth has been multiplied may, if we make the right use of our plant and experience, be very greatly quickened in the next. The great increase in wealth that has taken place has been certainly accompanied by some improvement in its distribution: but it must be admitted that in this respect we are very far from satisfactory results, and that a system which produces bloated luxury plus extreme boredom at one end of the scale and destitution and despair at the other, can hardly be called the last word, or even the first, in civilisation.